UNITED
NATIONS

A/S

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/51/670
S/1996/934
12 November 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-first session
Agenda item 10
REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON
THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Note verbale dated 12 November 1996 from the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Azerbaijani Republic to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to forward herewith the text of the statement by the Milli Mejlis (Parliament) of the Azerbaijan Republic of 8 November 1996 with respect to the so-called "presidential elections" scheduled on 24 November 1996 in the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

The Permanent Mission of the Azerbaijani Republic to the United Nations should be grateful to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his kind assistance in distributing the attached statement as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 10, and of the Security Council.

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ANNEX

[Original: Russian]

Statement issued on 8 November 1996 by the Milli Mejlis (Parliament) of the Azerbaijani Republic

On 24 November 1996, "presidential" elections are scheduled to be held in the so-called "Nagorny Karabakh Republic", the highland part of the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

The Milli Mejlis (Parliament) of Azerbaijan declares that the holding of such "elections" is contrary to universally recognized international legal norms and the Constitution and laws of Azerbaijan and has no legal basis whatsoever.

This action by the Armenian separatists, which violates the rights of the 50,000 Azerbaijani citizens who were expelled from the highland part of the Karabakh region, once again confirms the aggressive claims of the Armenian side.

The Milli Mejlis of Azerbaijan, expressing the sovereign will of the Azerbaijani people, considers the holding of "presidential elections" in the "Nagorny Karabakh Republic" - which no one has recognized - as an encroachment on the sovereignty and independence of Azerbaijan and its territorial integrity and as an attempt to legitimize that purported regime.

The international community is well aware of the selfless and untiring efforts of the President of Azerbaijan, Mr. Heydar Aliyev, to resolve the conflict through peaceful means. At a time when the leaders of Azerbaijan are taking every possible measure to stabilize the situation in the highland part of Azerbaijan's Karabakh region and to resolve existing problems in accordance with the Constitution of Azerbaijan, international legal norms and United Nations instruments, this action by the Armenian separatists should be viewed as one more step towards the forcible seizure of a part of Azerbaijani territory.

The attempt to hold the so-called "elections" once again confirms that the Armenian separatists are trying all ways of avoiding a political settlement of the conflict and are therefore opposed to the efforts of prestigious international organizations and mediators, especially the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. International organizations have repeatedly confirmed the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. For example, Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The Milli Mejlis of Azerbaijan views this new provocation by the Armenian separatists as a gross violation of the Azerbaijani Constitution and a flouting of universally recognized international legal principles and norms.

The Milli Mejlis of Azerbaijan considers the attempt by the Armenian separatists, who have seized political power in the highland part of Azerbaijan's Karabakh region, to hold "presidential elections" as a political

provocation intended to disrupt efforts to achieve peace and harmony in relations between two adjacent States - Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The Milli Mejlis of Azerbaijan wishes to inform the international community that the attempt to hold illegal elections in the highland part of Azerbaijan's Karabakh region will have an adverse effect on the peace process.

The Milli Mejlis of Azerbaijan once again calls upon the Armenian community of Nagorny-Karabakh to desist from such actions and refrain from disrupting the peace negotiations.

The Milli Mejlis of Azerbaijan calls upon the Armenian side to take a constructive position in the peace process and declares that only after a peaceful settlement of the conflict - one that guarantees the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, the return of Azerbaijani refugees to their homes and the restoration of the government bodies established by the Azerbaijani Constitution - will Azerbaijan be able to ensure the security of the Armenian community and its development within the Azerbaijani Republic.

The Milli Mejlis of Azerbaijan appeals to the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and other international organizations to halt the holding of "presidential elections" in the highland part of Azerbaijan's Karabakh region, since such a provocative act will disrupt the peace process.